

## HARDY'S TESS

### IS REALLY A PURE WOMAN FAITHFULLY PRESENTED?

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#### ABSTRACT

*My effort in this study has been to highlight and delineate those aspects of Tess which is discussed never before with full volume. People question 'purity of Tess' and 'faithfulness' of the presentation but a deep probing or analysis in this direction has been partially accomplished. My study may have several missing links but have made a sincere attempt to bring to fore the doubts, conjectures and hints which can give the reader a food for thought about painted purity and faithfulness of Tess in the novel. The subtitle itself entails author's subjectivity, tilt towards heroine, radical indeterminacy of the text and above all, ambivalent narratorial stance of author.*

*'Nobody is beyond fault and weakness', believing this maxim I have pinpointed rather suggested some weaknesses in Tess and virtues in 'proclaimed villains'. Life is neither white nor black, so are the characters, life is full of shades, colour and contours and here, we came to know the shades, colour and contours of all characters which bring to light that after all we are humans neither pure evil like devil nor pure good like angels. The weakness of Tess is quite humane and slight virtues of others are also of humans. This thesis brings to fore the issue of coercion and consensual seduction of Tess. The progression of paper with highlights the facts and bring to fore some revelation which were thought earlier but not very much discussed.*

*Despite goodness and purity of Tess – a woman wronged, cheated even by fate and of course, by world, the nagging question of the 'flaw' of Tess persists and looms large on her, raising points, worthy of discussion-how the 'flaw' led to tragedy. The most discussed points and aspects in novel relate to coincidence, absurdity of Alec's 'conversion or deconversion' and 'indubitable hypocrisy of Angle Clare' but in all such exercises the novel's fundamental conflict of purpose is conveniently ignored.*

*Hardy's treatment of lives of characters is considerably indicted for its consistency or implausibility but mainly textual incoherence is the problem, he should be noted for.*

*Bernard Paris<sup>1</sup> has offered an incisive analysis of the thematic confusion arising from Hardy's treatment of nature versus conventions. Slightly deviating from B. Paris's account of subjectivity of author to his protagonist, my thesis would take up this relationship to examine formal coherence in his work.*

*It is very true that author identifies with his heroine in Tess, and allows the most compulsive, convenient authorial exoneration of Tess's mistakes rather blunders; such mistakes instead would have served as signs and points of heroine's moral culpability provided the unity of novel had been the priority of the author.*

**KEYWORDS:** 'Purity of Tess' and 'Faithfulness' Conversion Or Deconversion' and 'Indubitable Hypocrisy of Angle Clare'

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## INTRODUCTION

The intention of Hardy to project Tess as a celibate, tragic heroine is somehow undermined with several cross currents explored by a subtle and objective reading of Tess where and when readers are not swayed or swept by the intense emotional appeal of author. Undeniable poetic grandeur is enough to blind the reader to its textual coherence as a 'second reading leaves a lower estimate than the first'.<sup>2</sup> Lionel Johnson in this regard quotes, "Tess is a great literature – but finally, difficulties at first unfelt began to appear"<sup>3</sup> Johnson here is mesmerized by the beauty of book but he finds pleasure in it "On a different plane than that of textual inconsistency." He locates, "Either the story should bear its own burden of spiritual sorrow, each calamity and woe crushing out of us all hope, by its own resistless height: or the better sentences of comment should be lucid and cogent (p. 389). In Hardy's indictment of society, Johnson "can see .... but a tangle of inconsistencies". (p. 391). Hardy's narration creates in Johnson a yearning for definition of nature, law, society and justice. (Pp. 390-1). Johnson perception of Hardy finds in the latter, "apparent denial of anything like conscience in men, that makes his impressive argument so sterile" (p. 394). Johnson feels that Tess could make 'true use' of her passage through "fire and water but she never does" (p. 397). Laura Claridge ] if we are swept by Johnson's words, we find that the obvious splendour considerably dazzles us, but author-guided identification with protagonist loses its effect and inconsistencies start surfacing themselves with the progression of the story. A revelatory insight in to text will unveil various unspoken things.

In this, regard, Virginia Woolf delineates in Hardy: It is as if Hardy himself were not quite aware of what he did, as if his consciousness held more than he could produce.<sup>4</sup> Ambivalence that Hardy drops for audience, point to his weakness of authorial control. Tess is presented as a heroine who acts or reacts impulsively as a last resort to survive. She is to be presented as a victimized girl to project Alec as a stock Villain. Her victimization at the hands of merciless villains downplays her as an assertive, impulsive woman who is governed by her instinct and has preference for wilful exercise over logic and reason.

D.H. Lawrence finds a very important relationship in his book – Tess is sharp tongued and severe as she rides to Trantridge with Alec, she exclaims angrily in response to his race downhill, "Thank God we're safe despite your fooling".<sup>5</sup> She allows her hat to be blown off so that she can mount pressure on Alec to stop. Tess adamant attitude paves way for our apportioning of responsibility to both Alec and Tess in their future relationship. Head strong Tess is made so tractable that any villain whether it be Alec or Angel can take undue advantage of her but this malleability shown as her dominant trait in novel to sustain her innocence is not in the proportion, Hardy has suggested for it. Hardy finds her submissive in her adjustment and accommodation to Alec but this impressionable nature of Tess is not her 'real flaw'. Hardy's miscalculation lies in the fact that he shifts authorial perspective on a character whose textual integrity, he feels is a requisite to sustain and propel the plot. Inconsistency of Tess lies in the fact that on one hand, she is impressionable, tractable but on other hand, she is shrewd, sure, head strong and eventually proves her against fate.

My intention here is not to counter check or question established 'tragic flaw' of a noble character but to highlight element of surprise how such major instinct, incoherent instinct coalesce into a synchronized and coherent personality. Hardy's concession to his heroine also has been on anvil as Elizabeth Langland, in her essay on problematic heroine, Sue Bridehead, remarks that "inconsistency within a character becomes a textual problem only if the inconsistency marks a novelist's confusion of parts rather than the identifying mark of the character's psychology".<sup>6</sup>

*Spectator* also registers public annoyance as it reads: If she be “faithfully presented”, she was not at all faithful to her own sense of duty in the course of a story. “Again and Again Hardy shows her shrinking from the obvious and imperative duty of the moment when she must have felt that the whole sincerity of her life was at stake.” These caustic remarks, no doubt, hint at moral indignation yet it relates itself very much to novel.<sup>7</sup>

It is very much true that Hardy announced his novel as ‘didactic novel’.<sup>8</sup> Longman also finds it as ‘story with a moral’.<sup>9</sup> ‘The Speaker’ also proposes it to be powerful and valuable as a contribution to the ethical education of the world<sup>10</sup> put this picture portrayal of novel doesn’t wipe off the confusion about what exactly it wants to communicate. May be, Hardy’s intentions would have been to pull up a set of people who are governed by strict dogmas or regimen of values and renounce heart with all its fine feelings just as a pumping organ. The confusion over Tess approval of her relationship with Alec, Erotic hypocrisy of Tess, her affair with Alec are the serious points to define her fate.

Hardy has evolved her innocence, decks it up meticulously as this is the chief merit of Tess and fulcrum of novel, on which the edifice of entire novel rests. But this innocence compels Hardy to compromise the unity of novel as the author chooses to emphasize Tess as an agent of morality; Alec is implicated as an intruder in the privacy of Tess and steals always her virginity, Angel is also sham and shallow in his persona as he assigns prime importance to purity of Tess and accuses Tess for the tyranny perpetrated on her by Alec. Hardy’s in his words:

“An unmarried woman be sexually inexperienced remains of utmost importance in judging her value.” (Quoted in Laura Claridge on Page 66)

Denies the convention of morality he upholds, and this confusion of author whether to choose puritan purity or advocate innocent mistakes of Tess yields greater confusion to novel. Hardy’s ethics about mortality remain unexplained as his intention constantly has been to shield Tess against social criticism. Hardy proves his ambivalence in famous love scene where he remarks about her demeanour,

“A little more than persuading had to do with the coming of it (the baby), I reckon, there were they that heard a sobbing one night last year in The Chase.” (Page. No. 76, Text)

This ‘reluctant consent’ triggers confusion about ‘favour cupid’ behaviour of Tess. Marvelously, Hardy offers or suggests no demarcation between consensual though reluctant relation or rape. His suggestion: *a little more or a little less, it was thousand pities that it should have happened to her*. This ‘reluctant consent’ over ‘free choice’ has saved her the status of a pure woman and allows us to interrogate Alec, censure Angel for his predestines and society for its callous attitude towards sensibilities of Tess, licentiousness of Alec and of course, its exaggeration intensified sympathy for Tess. An objective reader is stupefied with the discovery that a tough, headstrong Tess issues ‘reluctant consent’ to promiscuity of Alec where according to her personality, she should strongly rather violently react. Within the textual constraints and Hardy’s subjectivity, if not bias towards Tess, a reader, if not swayed or persuaded by poetic charm and torrents of emotion and sympathy for protagonist, Tess, bewilders at the knowledge or confusion whether Tess ‘accepted’ Alec or not; whether it was a forced affair or reluctant or consensual affair. Tess herself insists, *my eyes aware dazed by you for a little and that is all* (p. 65).

If she yields before flattering, tempting unrelenting advances of Alec, what kind of escapes does she make? What motivates her towards Alec, even she herself is not aware of. Tess justification of her escape with Alec as with ‘*a spring of the foot*’ she can transform her ‘*fear and indignation*’ at the gypsies into a triumph over them (p. 58) are insufficient. If

Tess here nourishes in her modern attitude towards conjugal relationship which allows somehow, 'pure' physical charm to sustain an affair or even conjugal relationship, she here, herself disavow such motivation as to go in Alec's folds.

Tess has bitterness even for herself as she never loved Alec but definitely had a weakness as she utters, "*....hate myself for my weakness as I do now*" (p. 65). If she professes no love, no physical attraction, what was the 'weakness' – physical, mental emotional, social or religious that allowed Alec to steal her honour? What moral code will explain Tess's action? The author, who is hell-bent to defend his heroine even when he finds her blind to her own virtuous self, allows her to maintain her own integrity, consistency and her own perspective towards entire situation. If Tess has really been a victim, why does she stay for couple of days after her 'weakness' and seduction with Alec? This is true that Alec's financial control over her family traps her in a coercive role but narrative of novel, unknowingly, implicates Tess and makes her share some responsibility for an illicit relationship despite her innocence. It is true that she allows Alec to kiss her to stop him from dangerous driving; she, with strong dissent, accompanies Alec on horse as her friends were all drunk, fate, used by Hardy as a strong motif plays a crucial role in shaping up destiny of Tess, but her weakness, recklessness, impulsiveness, anguish also lead her to killing of Alec and her consequent execution.

Surprisingly, it is unbelievable that drunk party, considers Tess's ride with Alec as 'out of frying pan into fire' but Tess maintains oblivion about it. If this procrastinated rape was much under scanner and radar of Tess then why did she not object to it? Why did she stay for couple of days in d'urberville despite this event? All these developments point towards gross inequality in relationship of Tess and Alec. Though half-heart, unwillingness is there in Tess regarding advances and charm of d'urberville but she 'accept' though reluctantly whatever this place offers to her:

*In a slight distress she part her lips and took it in (p. 34) and also when she 'takes in Alec's offering she wanders, desultorily .... eating in a half-pleased, half reluctant state whatever d'urberville offered her (p. 34).*

Her weak financial status, undoubtedly, for which she had to join this place, was quite instrumental in making her accept whatever from here could benefit her family and Alec's inclination towards her enabled her to stay at d'urberville unless and until he used her and threw her. After the fatal incident is practised, and when all mystic confusion dispenses and Tess recognizes this ultimate truth she takes extreme step of killing Alec. We can say, Tess is slightly more seasoned; Tess who, though reluctantly, allowed herself to be seduced into a relationship (with no social recognition) of some week's duration, was not weak or strong but confused, indecisive and over powered or instead, we can only come to a conclusion that Tess was raped, then seduced for some week's duration and rape allowed the seduction to take place or at least paved way for it.

If we compare Tess with Lizzie, heroine of Christina Rossetti's fantastic 'Goblin Market',<sup>11</sup> first we find that Victorian novelists appropriated the lushness of nature to foreground sexual initiation, secondly Lizzie's sister in Goblin Market Laura succumbs to the forbidden fruit and sucked and sucked them as Tess sucked strawberries but Lizzie:

*Lizzie uttered not a word:*

*Would not open lip from lip*

*Lest they should cram a mouth full in. (Page 69, Laura Claridge)*

Domestic compulsions, may be, mounted on Tess weakened her so much so that she could not assert herself as Lizzie and succumbed to pressure and temptation as Laura. Here, Tess, to satiate her appetite walks into orchard and also

forbidden terrains, with 'dazed' eyes, wherein she feels compelled to address and acknowledge also execute other responsibilities. Tess can be compared with Eve as Alec himself address her as 'temptress'. A careful reading and probing into text will reveal that she quickly yield to the temptation offered to her by villainous Alec.

Laura Claridge establishes conflation of identity between Alec and Tess, a kind of kinship between both at a deeper, more essential level than the mere literal relationship that she originally claims, a confused characterization that again subverts textual unity. Angel in famous richly sensual strawberry scene at Trantridge observes '*The red interior of her (Tess) mouth as if it had been a snake's*' (Page 69, Laura Claridge). Here, we come to know that Tess has same, if not evil, some inherent weakness propelled by compulsion and needs of family which assign her a status of temptress to violently attract Alec and Angel by her beauty and charm but her unwillingness to submit to lascivious advance of Alec seriously offends him.

This issue, despite all arguments in favour or against Tess, of coercion and consent assume the forefront in case of Tess. Hardy to shield and safeguard his much sympathized heroine make fate share her tragedy as foreordained and predestined. Fortuitous decision of Tess to take ride with Alec hinges on unfortunate coincidence of having a company of drunk people and a brawl with them. Here coincidence strains the bounds of credulity to make readers believe that Tess had no role to play whatever happened to her rather hurled on her as her seducer was very much confirmed in the idea that a woman flirts by playing at resistance. Controversy about role of Tess triggers with absence of 'seduction scene' in its true representation. Hardy, governed by Victorian constraints, shows no inclination to elaborate or deliberate upon the fact of 'consensual' or 'forced' status of Alec's mischief with Tess.

Whether it is acquaintance rape or consensual sexual encounter has never been clear, always been shrouded in mystery for reasons beyond explanation. We can insinuate here, that this reservation is practised by Hardy as Virginia Woolf has said, "...Hardy left it to his readers to make out his full meaning and to supplement it from their own experiences." (Source: Already referred in note no. 4).

May be, it is Hardy's choice to depict the events ambiguously with ambivalence through inferences and innuendos with very few explicit references. It may be speculated here that fury of Tess at him results in rather condescending amusement for Alec and resistances of Tess, he mistakes for foreplay, a part of natural role of the man to overpower the woman ;what emboldens Alec – 'no' of Tess taken as childish gesture, misgivings of a maiden inexperienced in affair – new and unsettling. Tess is suspicious of his ulterior motive but any rudeness from her outrages Alec as he blurts out: ... *you have trifled with my feelings, eluded me, snubbed me and I won't stand it.* (Page 70, Laura Claridge)

Hardy meticulously maintains Tess's purity through out the dominant narrative line precisely on the knowledge that despite man's abuse, despite yielding to temptation with reluctance to tempting aura of garden and woods, Tess is pure. If purity is so potent and important element and ingredient of Tess's personality why does she allow 'taking in' of 'forbidden fruit'? Tess taste for strawberry, like cravings of Eve for forbidden fruit, ultimately invites ruin on her and here Satan is Alec incarnate, ready for accusations of readers. Geoffrey Thurley, in the 'psychology of Hardy's love' claims that Tess's weakness is, in fact, her overwhelming sensuality, whereas Henry James in a letter to R.L. Stevenson, writes that her 'pretence of sexuality' is only equalled by the absence of it.<sup>12</sup>

Hardy's defense complicates the erotic disposition of Tess as he maintains a constant oblivion about it either to protect purity of Tess or Victorian compulsion to put the onus of blame on woman for seduction/rape and makes her purged

by suffering. Hardy himself flings us a question. Does she in tandem with lush sexuality at her disposal, possess inherent 'goodness' and 'purity' to protect her, that too, by choice against 'fall' of her?

Unity and coherence can be added to novel, at the most, under one condition that readers maintain sexual and psychological purity in Tess with her occasional stooping and denounce Alec as worst of the villain, a stock villain of melodrama. But in entire narrative, the demand of condemnation of Alec unintentionally but implicitly steers us to the acknowledgement of the moral failure of Tess because of Alec. It is greatly felt that right from her loss of virginity to her execution, Hardy intends to show how her heroine assumes strength wading through the ordeals of pain but her rigidity and stubborn attitude not to give charity or for give ness to 'Alec'; to reject Alec and also to reject Angel before cold blooded murder of Alec project her in poor light. Her failure lies in her choice of murder of Alec over forgiveness leading to her ultimate ruin is an antithesis to convention of text that frames Alec and Angel to be deliberate heirs and agents of Devil.

Hardy's biblical allusion to charity aims at exhibiting composed, decisive aspect of Tess but unconsciously he subverts what he intends to support. When she meets first time the '*converted Alec*' who desperately repents upon his villainy, she harshly pulls him up: *Have you saved yourself? Charity begins at home, they say* (p. 255) here even her empathizer narrator also acknowledges; "*The supressed discontent of his manner was almost pitiable; but Tess does not pity him*" (p. 265). She withholds her charity from an Alec too horrible for her to pity upon, though she has been on receiving end in her dialogue with Angel on same issue of forgiveness and pity.

*"Forgive me as you are forgiven!*

*I forgive you Angel.*

*O Tess ... how can forgiveness*

*meet such a grotesque, prestidigitation*

*as that".* (p. 191)

Tess forgives Angel for his premarital affair but in Victorian convention such is a trivial matter whereas Tess' liaison with Alec is conventionally beyond measures of forgiveness; for Angel - Tess is beyond forgiveness and for Tess, Alec; now the burning question that hangs low on our psyche is – who is villain? Who is cruel? Is Tess a paragon of virtue? If purity of body is stolen, what about purity of mind and soul?

Tess is very much demanding for pity for her as she pleads for legitimized baptism and 'proper burial' for baby sorrow and condemns minister for his partial pity. Her selective and, of course, person-specific application of pity especially in her case entails doubts about her stoic nature as portrayed in novel.

If we attune ourselves to subversive impulse and current imperceptibly flowing under the text and re-evaluate Tess, coming out of shadow of Hardy, we find Tess lacking in virtue of pity for which her two tyrants are accused of.

Tess's charity for Alec who loved her in most surprising, unconvincing, violent and tyrant way is very much required as he suffered for his sins in a beggarly fashion and earned redemption for his love for Tess no matter, in whatever grossly manner she practised his love no matter, how manly, uncouthly he professed his love for Tess. There are incipient signs of Alec reckless affection towards Tess for instance, to save her from September's chill he offers her his coat. He wildly rather passionately chases her when she returns to Marlott; Tess's lack of affection for him bothers him and he utters:

*You did not come for love of me (to trantridge) (p. 65) and You'll never love me, I fear. (p. 66)*

Tess's absence from his life leads to his conversion; igniting a fierce feeling, it propels in Alec a revival of possession for her. When Alec comes by Tess, his lips start tremble and his eyes hang '*confusedly in every direction but hers*' (p. 254). He feels sorry for this unnatural gesture and disorientation of mind saying that "*considering what you had been to me, it was natural enough*" (p. 255).

He pockets humiliation when he asks Tess to marry him, he draw the marriage licence out of his pocket with a '*slight fumbling of embarrassment*' (p. 261). The discovery of her marriage disappoints him but he offers financial help to the couple. *He curses himself for having no legal right to protect Tess from the malevolent farmer* (p. 268).

Alec's reflective state of redressing past iniquities done to Tess might provide her safe haven but she denounces him as a hardcore villain and dismisses his entreaties as she does not want him to obligate her. She treats him as a predator beast and he, tired of this treatment comes true to her expectations. Sardonic laughter awaited from this villain has a base of desperate unacknowledged and unexpected love for Tess. He loves her but fails to translate it into fine and finer sensibility and finally pay 'to the utmost farthing' for his surprising and textually disruptive fantasy that one day, may be, out of necessity she will be compelled to love him. He is a kind of lover who believes that he should snatch all props for Tess to lean on and out of necessity she will come to him. His love may be true but highly self satisfactory, possessive, narrow and also suffocating which pressurizes ultimately, Tess to cut off the arm which stifled her throughout life and even if she dies, in execution of her impulsive decision, she would die in peace.

All these narratives and facts complicate and confuse hostility for Alec and empathy for Tess. To maintain the climax of novel it is required to comprehend Alec's fidelity of sexual desire and killing of him – an inheritable act of a manipulated, maltreated heroine whose mind was unhinged that time because of former's endless tyranny on her.

If we consider Angle's point, we find Alec's killing is unnecessary because Angel's catharsis in the desert converted rather metamorphosed him into a 'changed personality', When Tess talk to him from the stair case, she is in commanding position, both in station and articulation while Angel at the receiving end on stair appears to be so weak that even Tess infer that *he is dying* (p. 315). If Tess doubts Angel whether he is likely to accept her as an adulteress or not, how could she believe he will accept her as a murderer? May be, changed attitude or love of 'changed' Angel has not been the drive or motivation behind killing, rather strong vindictive self and exhausted tolerance have served as the weapon to smash Alec.

The strength of murder scene is weakened by an uneasy intuition that Alec deserve not to be killed; deserted were both Alec and Tess and we might flinch at what could be interpreted as injustice. Angel, no doubt, deserve and accepts too the putative rebuke as '*his had been a love*', '*which alters when it alteration find*' (p. 305) but seriously unlike that of angel's, Alec's affectation if not affection, despite its possessor's inadequacies has been unwavering.

The narrative description of Alec's murder creates a subtext of confusion over the role of Alec as a seducer 'lover' or predator. If we rewind murder scene it is found that the wound given by Tess was small but the target was his heart, Alec was fixed dead, pale as if 'he had scarcely moved after the infliction of the blow (p. 317) yet Tess yelled out:

*"... you had used your cruel persuasion upon me ... you moved me ... you taunted me ... you have torn my life all to pieces ... made me be what I prayed you in pity not to make me be again!"* (p. 315).

Coming back to 'purity' and 'faithful' presentation, we find that Hardy's increasing emphasis in the gestation of the novel on Tess's purity also falls in the realms of investigation and analysis. If *Tess* operates within a realist paradigm we can retest and re-evaluate the 'purity' and 'faithfulness' of Tess, both these virtues have a double challenge, first to the morality it expects to encounter and contest and secondly to an aesthetic judgement – what is 'pure' and faithful?

The novel is surely, divided into 'phases' which spatialise temporal change aiming at a decisive progression emerging between silence and articulation leading to a deterministic growth so that 'pure' cannot be ascribed or attached to a state of being 'untinctured by experience' (as first phase relates to maiden not woman), effectively to the final moments, may be death of fulfillment. 'Untinctured' necessarily not 'untainted' or 'moralistic' but clearly surface the possibility of 'shame' to mind.

"Quoting St. Jerome, the most unlikely defender of erotic growth, it links truth with offence."  
(John Goode, *The Offensive Truth*, page 184).

Surely such links breed "confusion arising from a prior ideological commitment and an insurgent humanist identification with the protagonist. (John Goode, p. 185).

Here polemic is disregarded altogether and emerges a 'naturalized Tess' sacredly possessed by readers. The reconstructing of the text of *Tess*, taking into view, as earlier discussed, its incongruity or unity, may be, discontinuity or the endless repetition of form lead the text to an impasse in which "text is trapped in an infinite plurality of deciphering which are no more than the ruins of human song that blow about Egdon Heath".<sup>13</sup>

P. Boumelha also "ends with a strangely despairing pluralism that does not question the graceful appropriation of J. Bayley."<sup>14</sup> Despite, partial absence of coherence, impact of novel does not cease to be unified in the double anger of the subtitle – pure/faithful.

A deep reading dispel the perception of bias and a polemical design comes in view where discontinuities are seen as properties of the ideological discourses, the text articulates vehemently. It is hetero glossic, in Bakhtin's real sense which is not the revisitation of polysonic ghosts as it is often treated, but the evaluation of verbal interactions.<sup>15</sup>

This '*unsophisticated girl*' strongly reacts to Angel's comments – *How can we live together, while that man lives?* (Ch. 36). Angel's absurd question echoes and adds to the dimension of the reader's response – the desire to naturalize the situation, to reserve it, to use it rather in terms of a personal survival. But Angel's reaction after Alec's murder raises several questions about purity, faithfulness even about reliability of Tess.

"... His horror at her impulse was mixed with amazement at the strength of her affection for himself; at the strangeness of its quality, which ... extinguished the moral sense ... wondered what obscure stain in the d'urberville blood had led to this aberration ...." (Ch. 57) QTD in John Goode, Pg. 193.

Tess's unexplained decision to give up on Angel, go off with Alec, his murder, Angel's interpretation of her action or impulse don't tally with faithfulness of Tess or her faithful presentation. If we compare 'Hester Prynne' of the *Scarlet Letter* with Tess, we find Hester suffering more than Tess – at the hands of Dimesdale her actual offender; chilling worth, constant tormentor; society who hails her as an adulteress; the badge of letter 'A' and her own daughter. But she does not murder any of her offenders and purges herself through her suffering and agony providing herself purity by penance and sacrifice. Tess practises no penance and professes no 'Chosen Sacrifice'.

This narrative about Tess after murder:

It was very terrible ....

woman are hysterical ....

*She terrifies me .... human clinging to*

*him ... she seeks shelter form reality.* (Page 195, John Goode).

contradicts Hardy's faithful presentation as here Tess, driven to insanity, may be, by extreme torture and mental upheaval, is faithfully accused of something, necessarily not 'pure' or 'faithful'.

The dream of 'possible future' with Angel was infact a private thought of Tess which she surely suppressed in folds of her heart as it may imply or infer that she was laughing at this compromised dignity, her silence, her response that the 'story of a woman – *the heaviest of crosses to herself – seemed but amusement to others*', also '*there are few women's lives that are not tremulous*' reflect upon her disturbed psyche, she does not purge herself or add to her purity with the passage of time, rather increment in suffering makes her, more and more, succumb to the wrong hurled on her; perhaps, so much so that she imbibes that 'wrong' in her and perpetrates the same pain on Alec who earlier made her life not worth living and she now takes his life in retaliation.

Her response to Angel's decentring of love which she mistakes, earlier as a bliss (as he lacks in flavour for charity) is indifferent. Spontaneously, she takes possession of novel's campaign key word:

*'The one man on earth who had loved her purely, and who had believed in her as pure'.* (p. 197, *Offensive Truth*).  
John Goode.

Her apollo, her God whom she mistakes as her saviour proves himself 'tender' for her and this is the miscalculation and limit less expectation of her. It must be noted here that "*she has told Alec that it is possible to retain loving kindness and purity.*" (p. 197, *Offensive Truth*, John Goode).

## CONCLUSIONS

This kindness and purity which she could retain; but how far and how long does she succeed? In short, we can say that Tess has been pure, as Hardy has warned us against naturalizing Tess with his subjectivity, also faithfully presented her; but there is nothing 'pure and faithful' in human nature and these two virtues have various interpretation and connotation Tess, an ingénue whom Hardy himself hails as 'unsophisticated', how can acquire perfection in 'purity and faithfulness'? My focus here has been, not to invert the perception of novel upside down but the chinks in the fabric - 'pure' and 'faithful' allow light to light up the weaknesses of human nature where Tess is no exception.

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10. Virginia Woolf, 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy', in *The Second Common Reader* (New York, 1932), pp. 266-80; rpt. 'Hardy's Moments of Vision', in Elledge (ed.), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, p. 401.
11. Scott Elledge (ed.), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (New York, 1965). All further page references will be cited in the text.
12. Elizabeth Langland, 'A Perspective of One's Own : Thomas Hardy and the Elusive Sue Bridehead', *Studies in the Novel*, 12 (1980), 17-18.
13. R.H. Hutton, *The Spectator*, Jan. 1892, quoted in Lerner and Holmstrom (ed.), *Thomas Hardy*, p. 69.
14. In the Preface to the fifth edition of *Tess*, Hardy claimed that 'the novel was intended to be neither didactic nor aggressive' (see Elledge [ed.], *Tess*, p. 2).
15. Andrew Lang, *Longman's Magazine*, Nov. 1892, quoted in Elledge (ed.), *Tess*, p. 384.
16. *The Speaker*, Dec. 1891, quoted in Lerner and Holmstrom (ed.), *Thomas Hardy*, p. 61.
17. Christina Rossetti, *Goblin Market* (Boston, 1981), II. 49, 69, 134-5.
18. Thurley, *Psychology*, p. 152, and Henry James, quoted in Lerner and Holmstrom (ed.), *Thomas Hardy*, p. 85.
19. J. Hillis Miller, *Fiction and Repetition* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 116-46.
20. Penny Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form* (Brighton, 1982), p. 132.
21. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caroline Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, 1981). See also V.N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. V.I. Titunek (1926; New York, 1973), pp. 40-1.